

[Pullman Porters' Holiday]

Beliefs & Customs - Folkstuff 14

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Frank Byrd

ADDRESS 224 West 135th Street, N.Y.C.

DATE March 1, 1939

SUBJECT Pullman Porters' Holiday

1. Date and time of interview
2. Place of interview
3. Name and address of informant
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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Pullman Porters' recreation room. Billiard tables, lunch counter, bulletin boards, card tables and small lending library.

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Frank Byrd

ADDRESS 224 West 135th Street, N.Y.C.

DATE March 1, 1939

SUBJECT A Pullman Porter's Holiday

The boys are sitting around recounting incidents of travel, swapping slightly exaggerated stories of their successes in Denver, Chicago or East St. Louis with various bevy of teasing browns or sleek, well-groomed high yallars. When time hangs too heavy, they play a hand or two of poker, black-jack or tonk. The following is an example of typical conversation.

"I heard they got a pretty good game down at the Straightaway Club."

"Yeah, the Rhythm and Symphony too."

"Thinkin about sittin in?"

"How you fixed for beader?" (money)

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"Not so hot. I got a V - note." (\$5)

"Chickenfeed."

"Maybe chicken feed you, but damn if it taint beans and greens to me and my ole lady."

"Well let's take a gander at a couple of these joints and see whats poppin."

"Mit this lousy hand wid a six spot. Never had such a run of tough luck in my life."

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"Dot's you' funeral, ol man."

"Stop beefin so much. You oughta hear my story. Make you cry lak whore at her old mans hanging."

"Cut the gum-beatin ol Lane and bet-up or shut up. You niggers is worse than a lot of ol womens."

"You talk too much outa yo' mouth."

"Yeah if you had as much money as you got mouth, you wouldn't need to play no damn cards."

"Take that card, ol nigger. It was off the deck. I seen it."

"You're a black lie, you didn't."

"To hell you say! It was a six of spades."

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"Houseman, you heard what he said. All right, I got a hard fifteen to bit. That makes me a pat 21. So take 'em all in. Every living human."

"All right, git down boys. This ain't no funeral. The house man works on time. My ol lady got to eat too."

"Well house, give me a blind." (free bet)

"Dis is a five dollar game. You ain't bought no five bucks worth of chips."

"Gimme a blind anyhow. I done bought enough chips in dis damn game to take twenty niggers off relief. Somebody better gim'me some 'n' or I'll break dis joint up."

"Like hell you will. They'll be takin you outa here in pieces if you come startin any stuff in here. Go on home and ask your old lady for some 'n'."

"Leave my ol lady out of it. I'll [cuta?] couple of stripes on you ass."

"You better git your self a scythe then. Ain't no swithblade in the world sharp enough to cut this hide."

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"Dats what you say. I'll cut yo' ass so fas' you'll think I'm a damn chopping machine."

"That's a lie an' you know it. An duh Lawd don't love ugly."

"Well boys, thanks for the little collection. The Lawd'll bless you for dis. Now I guess my ol lady kin git dat fur coat she's been pestering me about."

"Geez, ol man, now dat you won all the money, how about sendin me to my dinner?"

"Hell, I wouldn't give a crip a crutch nor a bitch a bone."

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"I give you some money in Mephis once."

"That just goes to show what a foll you is. Who but a fool would give me any money. Everbody knows I'm out on a strict hustle. So let that be a lesson to you. Never hip a square or feed a fool. Let him learn it the hard way."

"Well lend me a red (25¢) then."

"I'll die first."

"Den I guess I'll have to take it."

"Dats' de only way you'll git it. An den it'll be over my dead body."

"Huh! You don' know me. Hungry as I is, I'd take some 'n' offa [Dewey?]."

"Ol son, you a black lie and you don't love yo' Jesus."